The Cuffer

A Newspaper for School Councils in Newfoundland and Labrador

 **Fall 2021**

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**Message from the NLFSC President**



Hello. Councils,

It is hard to believe the first month of a new school year is behind us. Unfortunately, September has been a very stressful month for the education system in NL. The Delta Variant has made its way into several of our schools and impacted students and school

staff.  Many parents and teachers have called our office and we are doing everything we

can to support and provide information where needed. We often feel helpless and aren’t able to do anything more than be a

listening ear, but we are glad to help in any way we can.

 We have also been speaking to Administrators and know the situation is taking a toll on them as well. Many have been working day and night, and on weekends to follow the directives of the Chief Medical Officer and make the necessary adjustments that come with moving from low to high-risk scenarios. The compassion and effort by many to contain the virus and keep our children safe is remarkable. It reminds us once again, that we will get through this pandemic by being kind, respectful, and patient.

The beginning of a new school year usually means calls from parents regarding class size and resources – and this year has been no different. More teaching units, and an increase in guidance, administration and student assistant time remain a priority. I have discussed these concerns with the Minister, and will continue to advocate for more resources.

At this time many schools are in the process of setting up school councils and we are receiving many calls on the role and responsibilities and terms of office.

School councils are mandated organizations that facilitate parental participation in our schools. When parents play an active role in their children’s education, good schools become even better. Parent engagement is a key factor in the enhancement of a student’s academic success and well-being.

The start of the school year is always a moment of great anticipation and excitement.

Cherish these years for and with your child.  Never lose sight of the fact that time moves quickly and the growth you will see on a daily basis will seem to flash by in no time.

Family and school are partners in education, and students are the beneficiaries of all of that love and support.

In the coming months, the federation will continue to do its work of advocating, and bringing people together around the common vision of an excellent education system. The education and wellbeing of each child will always be our focus.

On behalf of the NLFSC executive congratulations on a successful first month, and best wishes for a great school year!

Please do not hesitate to contact us with your concerns by emailing: nlfsci@gmail.com, or by calling the NLFSC office at (709) 764-8993.

Sincerely,

Don

mail:Don.Coombs@easternhealth.ca

**Other members of the NLFSC Executive:**

David Hillier, Vice President

Email: davidhillier@gmail.com

Craig Tavenor

Email: cttavsmail@gmail.com

Lori Barry

Email: a.lori.barry@gmail.com

Ruby Hoskins, Past President

Email: rubyhoskins63@yahoo.ca

**Focus Group for Eat Great and Participate**

Newfoundland and Labrador has commissioned Narrative Research to conduct online focus groups with youth between the ages of 16 and 21 to better understand youth’s perceptions on making healthy food and beverage choices.  They are also seeking ways to successfully engage youth to advocate for more healthy food and beverage choices in recreation, sport and community settings. This information will be used to inform Eat Great & Participate’s strategy for engaging youth, going forward.

 Eat Great and Participate invites youth with varying degrees of engagement experience to participate in these focus groups.

The focus groups will take place via Zoom, and will last approximately one and a half hours. Participants will receive a $65 incentive as a thank you if they qualify and take part.

If youth are interested in participating, they can complete this short online questionnaire to see if they qualify:

<https://www.narrativeresearchsurveys.ca/S2/87/936131/>

Since there is limited space, they will only be contacting those selected to participate. Should you have any questions about this project, or wish to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact  focusgroups@narrativeresearch.ca

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| --- | --- |
|  |   |
| **Stephanie O’Brien (She/Her),** **Registered Dietitian** |
| Eat Great and Participate Coordinator |
| (709) 729-4490, (709)729-3814 |  |
| 1296A Kenmount Road, Paradise, NL A1L 1N3 |
| Recreation**NL**.com |
|  |
|  |  |  |



**Canada’s Outstanding Principal**

Do you have an outstanding Principal at your school? If so, show your appreciation to your principal for all their hard work by nominating them for Canada’s Outstanding Principal Award.

This award recognizes the unique and crucial contribution of Principals in publicly funded schools.

Visit www.thelearningpartnership.ca for more information

**Membership Renewal**

This year marks the 42nd year the

Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils (NLFSC) has been representing local school councils, PTAs, and home and school associations.  There are many changes and challenges taking place in the school system and NLFSC is busy advocating on your behalf.

Your continued membership will help support our mission in striving for excellence in Education, for all children in Newfoundland and Labrador, and to represent your school council as part of the collective voice for school councils and for all parents/guardians.

**(Membership application attached)**

**Are You New to a School Council?**

Welcome and thank you for getting involved in your education community in this way! We hope you enjoy your term.

School councils are mandated organizations

composed of parents, teachers, community

members, and students (high school level) that facilitate parental participation in our schools.

Sections 25 and 26 of the Schools Act, 1997,

provides the legislative authority.

A school council’s effectiveness depends, to a large extent, on how it develops and utilizes the capabilities of its members.

One of the most important functions of school councils is to advise on the quality of the teaching and learning in the school.

School councils are also responsible for

advising the board on matters of concern to the school and to the school community.

School councils promote transparency as

council actions and decisions are communicated to the school community through their meeting.

A school council is a means to facilitate

communication and cooperation between home and school.

The principal is responsible for the direct

management of the school and, therefore, hasresponsibility for the development and

implementation of school-based policies.

School councils act in an advisory capacity

whereby they advise on how to implement such

policies. This advisory role provides school

councils and the school community the

opportunity to improve the teaching and

learning environment of the school.

If this is your first year on a council be sure to

locate a copy of the School Council Handbook,

or download it at:

[www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/public](http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/public)tions/k12/Handbo

ok2ndedition.pdf

This document is an invaluable resource in

assisting school council members to understand their roles and responsibility

**Did You Know there are:**

* 260 public schools
* 2 school boards – English and Francophone
* 63,722 students (decline of approximately 614 students from 2018-19)
* 7 private schools
* 3 First Nations schools

**2021-22 School Calendar**

***Holiday Schedule***

September 7 - Administration Day

September 8 - School Reopens/Students

October 11- Thanksgiving Day

November 11 - Remembrance Day

December 22 - Last Day of School - Christmas

January 4-School Reopens

April 14 - Last Day of School - Easter

April 25 - School Reopens

May 23 - Victoria Day

June 23 - Last Day for Students

June 24 - Administration Day

**Class Size Maximums for NL**

* K = 20
* Grades 1-3 = 25
* Grades 4-6 = 28
* Grades 7-9 = 31

**Media Interviews**

Over the past few months President Coombs

has been busy representing the goals of the

NLFSC and advocating for our students.

Don was interviewed by the media on a number

of education issues including class size, public

exams, teacher and administrator workload,

student safety, and returning to school.

He repeatedly stressed the importance of

supporting teachers, administrators and school

staff during the school year.

**Meetings and Advocacy**

NLFSC was updated on any changes and

Announcements regarding the return to school plan.

On September 21 a face-to-face meeting with Minister Osbourne and department officials took place.Don stressed the importance of keeping a focus on student safety during the 2021-22 school year. He said there are huge concerns with class size and a need for more student assistant time. A needs based, NOT number based, teacher allocation formula is essential for schools.

(NLFSC is receiving calls from parents regarding large numbers of kids in a class/

classes. Parents say some students with behaviour issues are infringing on the rights of others to learn. There are concerns about overcrowded classrooms with Covid-19 numbers still climbing.)

NLFSC would like to see more money allocated to the budget of each school. Many parents are fundraising for necessities such as books for libraries, and money to cover the cost of bandwidth/signal boosters in their area so students can access online learning.

Other agenda items included:

**Unvaccinated Teachers/School Staff**

(NLFSC has heard from many teachers, and some parents, who are upset about other teachers and staff who are choosing not to be vaccinated.)

**School Council Role and Operations**

(When will the revisions to the handbook be completed and available to school councils?

Consistent School Council Training is desperately needed. Many councils still don’t know what their role is and new administrators are having some difficulty establishing a council and understanding the functions.)

**The future of Online and Distance Learning**

(Is there consideration being given to online learning for some students who struggle with traditional classroom learning?  Many parents say their child, who suffered from mental health issues and bullying, thrived under the online model. Is online for these students being looked at? Can we make it easier for some students to do online learning?)
A separate budget to fund online learning will be required.

NLFSC has been included in the discussions to cancel Public Examinations for the 2021 school year. We are also having discussions on the value of public exams and standardized tests and whether or not they should be permanently eliminated.

(NLFSC feels a student's academic ability needs to continue to be measured even if public exams and standardized testing is eliminated. Other tools, such as the Performance Measurement Framework PMF, are necessary to collect evidence of academic progress. The (PMF) would be a very suitable and accurate replacement for public exams to improve learning outcomes for students.)

On June 8, NLFSC and the English School District participated in a Zoom Meeting on Strategic Planning. The meeting provided the opportunity for NLESD to present their Position Paper**: An Opportune Time/Reimagining Learning.**  Much of the discussion focussed on the meaning and value of Deep Learning for students.

NLFSC supports the theory of Deep Learning and recognizes the effects it could have in helping students to become lifelong learners. When engaged in deeper learning, students think critically and communicate and work with others effectively across all subjects. Students learn to self-direct their own education and to adopt what is known as ‘academic mindsets.

*Deeper learning is the process of learning for transfer, meaning it allows a student to take what’s learned in one situation and apply it to another.*

NLFSC believes a shift in the practise of deep learning and its implementation could require more resources.

An increase in a school’s operation budget will be needed (some of the resources currently used in classrooms is being paid for by teachers)
If there are learning centres/grouping of students as part of a deep learning practise it will require more physical space – adequate

space is already a challenge in many classrooms throughout NL.

NLFSC and the Minister also discussed Responsive Teaching and Learning (RTL). This is the foundation of deep learning and many schools are already doing this.

NLFSC reiterated the importance of support and PD for teachers.

On July 10, the NLFSC executive met in

St. Johns to talk about education issues, and set

advocacy goals for the school year.

Some topics discussed:

1. The Elimination of School District and Board of Trustees
2. ESD Position Paper: An Opportune Time
3. Substitute Teachers
4. Teaching Units
5. The Future of Online Learning

NLFSC is consulted regularly and our input valued. We are seen as a partner in education.

**SunSense for Schools- National Launch**

The Canadian Cancer Society has announced the national launch of the [SunSense](http://www.sunsense.ca/) program! With a goal of reducing skin cancer rates in Canada, SunSense supports elementary schools to create a sun safe environment that

protects staff and students from harmful ultraviolet radiation.

**The Canadian Cancer Society is seeking your assistance in distributing information about SunSense to schools in your school district.**

Schools will be provided **free resources** to assist in implementing a variety of ‘actions’ related to sun safety and earn points for each action that is completed. Based on the points earned, schools will be recognized as a **SunSense Certified** school. SunSense is available in both French and English.

For more information email and register at [sunsense.ca](http://www.sunsense.ca/)

**Why homework is important to student success**

It helps build responsibility. Some current buzzwords and phrases in the educational community are all about making students accountable and taking ownership of their learning. Homework helps kids do just that because they learn to take responsibility for their actions. When completed, they get the reward of earning a good grade, but face consequences in learning and in class when they leave it by the wayside.

Develop work ethic from an early age. Children need to understand the value of hard work and to form the obligation and self-regulation to commit to their projects and see them through. That said, homework can help students form a hardy work ethic that they will take with them to college and beyond.

Improves time management. From kindergarten to senior year, kids and teens struggle to manage time and prioritize their to-do list. For young children, parents tend to these assignments to guide kids to develop this important skill. The goal for high school students means eventually learning how to manage multiple tasks to fit

it in their schedule, and plan which will take longer or shorter

depending on their skill level, strengths, or weaknesses.

Gives students confidence. Sometimes kids need to attempt problems or exercises on their own and realize that failure is an important part of the learning process. In working through math problems or constructing essays, students gain confidence and hone creative problem-solving skills.

Enhances self-esteem. Once children gain confidence that they can complete an assignment or perform a skill independently, they build a healthy self-esteem, which is important to many aspects of everyday life.

Teaches study habits. Students don’t enter kindergarten already knowing how to study. In fact, many kids still struggle with study habits when they enter high school! Consistent homework can help children realize the importance of practice, especially if their teachers provide timely feedback and offer tasks



**2021 Scholarship Winners**

The Newfoundland and Labrador Education Foundation Inc. is pleased to announce the successful applicants for the 2020-2021 Scholarship Awards Program. Each student will receive a $1,000 scholarship to put towards university, public or private college or accredited trades college studies. Scholarships were awarded based on academic success, demonstrated leadership, and involvement within the school community.

The Education Foundation is a registered charitable organization committed to enhancing the educational experience of students in the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District whose primary purpose is to raise and allocate funding for scholarships and student-supportive initiatives.

NLFSC congratulates the following recipients and wishes them well in their future pursuits.

* **Sarah Lambe** (Ascension Collegiate)
* **Shelby Burt** (Baccalieu Collegiate)
* **Damien White** (Bayview Academy)
* **Tori Way** (Canon Richards Academy)
* **Morgan Andrews** (Cape John Collegiate)
* **Hannah Doyle** (Carbonear Collegiate)
* **Tamara Regular** (Copper Ridge Academy)
* **Elliot Dicks** (Elwood Regional High)
* **Michael Wight** (Exploits Valley High)
* **Renee Snook** (Gander Collegiate)
* **Holly Butt** (Heritage Collegiate)
* **Hudson Wentzell** (Holy Heart of Mary)
* **Abigail Mitchell** (Holy Spirit High)
* **Kaitlyn Dalton** (Holy Trinity High)
* **Kayla Brake** (John Burke High)
* **Robyn Knickle** (John Burke High)
* **Jacob Farrell** (Marystown Central High)
* **Dylan Norman** (Marystown Central High)
* **Alexis Young** (Menihek High)
* **Cassidy Martin** (Mount Pearl Senior High)
* **Damon Stewart** (New World Island Academy)
* **Andrew Barrett** (O'Donel High)
* **Chloe Gaudon**(Piccadilly Central High)
* **Precious Wunnitoi Alhassan** (Prince of Wales Collegiate)
* **Joelle Vokey** (Roncalli High)
* **James Fagan** (St. James Regional High)
* **Evan Williams** (St. Kevin's High)
* **Gracie Lundrigan** (St. Lawrence Academy)
* **Meghan Maloney** (St. Mark's All Grade)
* **Julie Lawrence**(Templeton Academy)
* **Holly Morgan** (Templeton Academy)
* **Nicholas Edwards** (Waterford Valley High)
* **Emma McIsaac** (Waterford Valley High)
* **Liam Ryan** (Laval High)
* **Alexa Tobin** (Holy Spirit High)
* **Nathan Locke** (Holy Spirit High)

**Vehicle Idling on School Property in NL**

**English School District Policy Directives:**

1. The District shall deploy “Idle Free” signage posted in a visible location on District property to alert drivers that engines should be turned off when a vehicle is on District property.

2. All Division Directors who have staff or contracted individuals/entities accessing District property on a regular basis are to communicate idle free policy requirements and to ensure they are aware of this policy.

3. School Administrators shall ensure all parents/guardians/students receive notice of this policy at the beginning of each school year.



 A conviction for failure to stop for a school bus with lights flashing, stop arm extended, is a $500-$1200 fine and six demerit points. [**#BackToSchool2021**](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/backtoschool2021?__eep__=6&__cft__%5B0%5D=AZUv7tB2mZdvbGMkt-2gIYmIZJEefP94sjl9U_9ng2_7BWXs6xBJMchTu7BAG1g9nhpeqK5lEefKj5QZL-U7yU959INJ42YWVCbkbRE2MxQHGLLuOKQyVT-C8KAd5axsq-JDkjhK3C4VNy8B_Rd0fgUzipmNmDWN7S6FLDrzhsSD2Q&__tn__=*NK*F)

**Bus Planner Portal for Parents**

The NL English School District's BusPlanner Parent Portal Login is now activated! Login to find out your child's busing schedule for September 2021 at [https://bit.ly/NLParentPortal](https://t.co/Fl1SgE22H7?amp=1) If you don't have an account, you can create one by going to the link.



Autism Society, Newfoundland & Labrador (ASNL) invites the province to participate in ***Active for Autism*** on Sunday, October 24 or at a time that is best suited to your schedule.

***Active for Autism*** is one of our most popular events and encourages families and friends to get together, get active, and raise awareness and funds for ASNL!

***Active for Autism*** occurs in close to a dozen locations across the province annually!   Because of ongoing pandemic concerns and restrictions, participants can choose to walk at an organized event in their community (in-person) or walk within their bubble at a time and location of their convenience (virtual).

 Registration for the event can be completed online or at one of the ASNL offices in

advance and by 3:30pm Friday, October 22nd. Registration is $25.

For more information about the Active for Autism event please contact ASNL Headquarters at 709-722-2803 or by email: info@autism.nf.net

**Autism Awareness Month**

October is Autism Awareness Month, providing

an opportunity for Canadians to learn more

about this condition and about how we can

support people living with autism, their families and their caregivers.

It is estimated that 1 in 66 children and youth have been diagnosed with autism in Canada, yet Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a condition that remains misunderstood by many people. People who live with autism deserveevery opportunity to participate fully in their

communities and contribute to our society.

The Autism Society of Newfoundland Labrador

(ASNL) is a provincial charitable organization dedicated to promoting the development of individual, lifelong, and community-based supports and services for people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), their families, and caregivers.

**International Walk to School Month**

October is International Walk to School Month. It gives children, parents, school teachers and community leaders, an opportunity to be part of a global event as they celebrate the many benefits of walking. Walkers from around the world walk to school together for various reasons — all hoping to create communities that are safe places to walk.

To learn more about this event and to register and receive stickers or promotional posters please visit http://www.iwalktoschool.org/

**Thank you to School Secretaires**

Thank you to our school secretaries for everything you do to keep our schools operating and our students happy. Your role extends far beyond what is laid out in your duties and we depend on you for so much. You always come through and we appreciate all you do.





The Cuffer is a benefit of membership in the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils.

The views expressed or implied in this publication are not necessarily official positions of the Federation.

The mention of any program, organization, resource, product, person, place, or school does not constitute an endorsement by the NLFSC.

Editor: Denise Pike, Proof Reader: Lori Barry

NLFSC Contact Information

 P.O Box 23140

 St. John’s NL

 A1B 4J9

Email: nlfsci@gmail.com

**www.facebook.com/nlfederationofschoolcoun**

**cils** [**www.schoolcouncils.nl.ca**](http://www.schoolcouncils.nl.ca/)